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ABSTRACT

Three Office of Career Education papers, specifically prepared for presentation to conferences of business-labor-industry persons are provided in this monograph, to clarify the roles and responsibilities, as well as advantages, of involvement in career education. The papers are titled the following: (1) The Linkage of Education with the World of Work and Career Development, which discusses work and careers, societal needs and career development, and work values; (2) Career Education and the Business-Labor-Industry Community, which outlines the basic nature, goals, and methodology of career education and the role business-labor-industry community would play in career education; (3) Career Education's Potential for Increasing Productivity, which presents eleven current conditions calling for educational reform, suggests ways in which these conditions can be said to have contributed to lack of productivity, and briefly outlines corrective measures called for by career education. (TA)

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MONOGRAPHS ON CAREER EDUCATION

REFINING THE CAREER EDUCATION CONCEPT

PART II

by
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Office of Career Education
Office of Education

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

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CAREER EDUCATION AND THE BUSINESS-LABOR-INDUSTRY COMMUNITY

PREFACE

From the beginning, career education has been pictured as an effort that cannot succeed if only educators are involved. Instead, it has been made clear that a collaborative effort is required involving (a) the educational system, (b) the business-labor-industry community, and (c) the home/family structure. Without the active involvement of the business-labor-industry community both in policy formulation and program operations, it is becoming increasingly obvious that career education cannot succeed.

Here, three Office of Career Education papers, specifically prepared for presentation to conferences of business-labor-industry persons, have been assembled in one place. It is hoped that, by doing so, a clearer picture of roles and responsibilities, as well as advantages, for persons from that community will be further clarified. The topic of involvement of persons from the business-labor-industry community is discussed extensively in many other USOE papers which are also available upon request.

Missing from this set of papers is one devoted specifically to problems and prospects for involvement of organized labor in career education. While this topic has been addressed in several ways as part of other USOE papers, a special paper dealing exclusively with this topic has yet to be prepared. It is recognized that its omission from this set represents a serious deficiency which must soon be corrected.

Also missing from this set of papers are some very valuable summaries of prior conferences held by USOE's Office of Career Education seeking advice and consultation from business-labor-industry personnel. These, too, have been published elsewhere. Their omission here is purposeful in that, by doing so, we hope to stimulate the production of many more valuable ideas and suggestions from those reading this monograph. Such comments and advice are eagerly sought from all who read this monograph.

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THE LINKAGE OF EDUCATION WITH THE WORLD OF WORK AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT

Technology continues to increase the complexity of our occupational society. It is not simply a matter of the increasingly rapid rate at which new occupations are created. Rather, it also involves recognition of the fact that these newer occupations require more skills and knowledge. As a result, the demand for unskilled labor diminishes each year. Relationships between education and work become closer and closer. We all know this to be true. Yet, both educators and the business-labor-industry community have failed to act constructively in accommodating to this fact. Instead, both have bended to blame those least responsible for this condition—namely, the youth who leave our educational institutions for the world of paid employment. When we tire of blaming youth, we blame each other. In either event, our youth continue to suffer.

Our educational institutions have operated, for years, under a false assumption that the best way to prepare youth for the world of work is to lock them up in a schoolhouse and keep them away from that world. The business-labor-industry community has operated under a false assumption that responsibility for readying youth for entry into the world of work must rest squarely on our educational institutions. As a result, the "world of schooling" and the "world of work" have been two quite different worlds. Is it any wonder that our youth have had trouble making the transition from the world of schooling to the world of work? Is it any wonder that adults needing occupational re-training have had trouble making the transition from the world of work to the world of schooling? It is time to quit asking such questions and to start moving toward some constructive solutions.

Needed solutions do not, in my opinion, lie in "fine-tuning" either world through making minor modifications. Instead, it seems to me we need to work together to create a "third world" for youth—a world in which educational institutions and the business-labor-industry community interact collaboratively to provide an environment, a set of learning experiences, and a set of opportunities for helping all persons in our society—adults as well as youth—women as well as men—high school dropouts as well as college graduates—the poor as well as the affluent—make a successful transition from the world of schooling to the world of paid employment.

To me, the career education movement represents the kind of "third world" environment that is so badly needed today. Career education's primary focus is on increasing the ability of individuals to recognize and capitalize on relationships between education and work in our society. It places equal emphasis on society's need for work in increasing productivity and on the individual's need to find personal meaning and meaningfulness in the work she or he does. It balances the law of microeconomics which, in effect, says "there

ain't no free lunch" with the law of macroeconomics which, in effect, says "in the long run, we're all dead." In so doing, it rests its basic strategies of conceptualization around the principles of career development.

It assumes that, unlike earlier educational concepts, career education is not something that the schools can do by themselves. Rather, at its basic roots, the career education movement has been pictured as a collaborative effort of the formal educational system, the business-labor-industry-professional-government community, and the home and family structure.

To discuss this "third world" environment represented by career education, it will first be necessary to discuss some "bed rock" principles concerning both work and career development. Second, it will be necessary to discuss briefly some basic steps in career development where this "third world" environment is needed.

Work and Careers

When I visit Boston, I try to spend some time in the old graveyard on the Boston Commons. There, on tombstone after tombstone, I can find three facts inscribed—the name of the person, age at time of death, and occupation. It is obvious, when one thinks about that period and reads those inscriptions, how each—cobbler, lamp maker, teacher, lawyer, etc.—contributed, through work, to the society of the time. More important, to me, it is obvious that work was a meaningful part of the person's lifestyle. It is easy for me to phantasize about lifestyles and the great meaning of work in that early American society. As I do so, I always have a great feeling of sadness that work, as a part of one's personal identification, no longer holds great personal meaning for many American citizens.

Please do not misunderstand what I am trying to say here. I am not pleading or wishing for a return to a kind of occupational society that existed in simpler times. If we inscribed gravestones with occupations today, we would need very large stones indeed simply to record the variety of occupational changes that can be expected to occur for most persons today. We would also have to inscribe the graves of women with considerably more than the words "wife and mother." No, I am not pleading for a return to a simpler society nor to a rebirth of the classic form of the Protestant work ethic. Those days are past. As we live in the present, we must look to the future. But, as we do so with a time perspective, there are some valuable observations to be made regarding work and life.

Work, in such a time perspective, is more properly regarded as a human right than as a societal obligation. When I use the word "work," I am (with some technical restrictions not necessary to specify here) speaking about conscious

effort aimed at producing benefits for oneself and/or for oneself and others. When any of us face squarely the question "Who am I?" we discover that, to a very large degree, the answer we give is stated in terms of our accomplishments–our achievements–things that we have done during our lifetime. When we face the even more personal question of "Why am I?" we find this to be even more true. Each of us is best known to ourselves and to others through the work we do and have done. Each of us finds our greatest sense of self worth through the personal and societal benefits we are able to produce as a result of our efforts–through our work.

I am speaking here of a basic human need of all human beings. It is a need that is just as real in 1974 as it was in 1774. It is a need to do, a need to be useful, and a need to be used. Former President Lyndon B. Johnson put it well when, in one of his speeches, he said "To hunger for use and to go unused is the greatest hunger of all."

If this, then, is what is meant by "work" as a human right, then it is important to define "career" as the totality of work one does in her or his lifetime. With this definition, it is obvious that each of us has only one career. For most persons, her or his career begins considerably prior to the pre-school years and extends well into the retirement years. During one's career, there are, and increasingly will be, several changes in jobs, positions, and even occupations. But one does not change one's career. Rather, one's career evolves and develops throughout one's lifetime and, in the process, serves as the clearest and most obvious way in which each of us can answer the two questions of "Who am I?" and "Why am I?"

In the sense I have been defining "work" here, it is clear that many thousands of people who have found jobs in today's occupational society have not found "work." Instead, they have found what must more properly be known as "labor"–as largely involuntary effort to produce something–be it goods or services–which, while supposedly of some value to others, holds little or no personal meaningfulness or sense of real accomplishment or real purpose for the individual. To meet their personal needs for work, they must look to activities in which they engage during their leisure time. They endure, rather than enjoy, their jobs. Productivity declines. Worker dissatisfaction increases. Neither employer or employee is happy.

Current efforts to humanize the work place are, at best, means of correcting this situation. They are not basic ways of preventing its occurrence in the future. A long range positive and preventive approach will demand that we face squarely the increasingly close relationships between education and work that exist in today's occupational society. If we do this, we find many workers whose jobs underutilize their talents, offer little or no challenge, and lead to boredom. We find many others who, because they lack specific skills, find they cannot meet

employer expectations and so are frustrated. Whether the condition is one of boredom or frustration, the result is the same—i.e., worker alienation.

Education, and relationships between education and work, is right in the middle of this dilemma. As a result, we hear people speaking of "overeducated" and "undereducated" workers. Such over-simplified expressions, by themselves, do not point the way toward positive change. The way toward change can only be found by considering problems of career development facing youth in terms of the potential that the "third world" of career education holds for helping youth—and adults—solve such problems in today's society.

Societal Needs and Career Development

There are four areas of societal and individual need to consider within the framework of career development. Each will be discussed very briefly.

First, the current rapidity of occupational change demands that both youth and adults be equipped with adaptability skills. Two broad classes of adaptability skills—(a) basic academic skills; and (b) good work habits—are prime concerns of the career education movement.

By basic academic skills, I mean what, in common terms, is often referred to as "reading, writing, and arithmetic"—the basic communication and mathematical skills that are prerequisite to learning specific vocational skills for large numbers of occupations. Career education seeks to increase the student's motivation for learning such skills through making clear both the need for and the necessity of such skills in today's world of work. Too many students, and too many teachers, seem to be caught in a "school for schooling's sake" syndrome at all levels of education. The only reason they can see for going to school is so that they can ready themselves for still more schooling. Students ask their teachers "What good will it do me to learn this?" and teachers too often answer by saying "You will need it for classes to take next year." As a result, student motivation for learning and teacher motivation for teaching declines. When this happens, academic achievement also declines and, when students leave school for the world of paid employment, employers complain that they (the students) can't read, write, or calculate at a level that will make them productive workers.

Career education seeks to turn this situation around by making education, as preparation for work, both a prominent and a permanent goal of all who learn. For this to occur, both employers and employees in the world of work outside of education must be active participants in the educational process. Many elementary school teachers, like their students, simply do not know how the skills they teach are utilized in the world of paid employment. The same can be

said of many teachers at the secondary and at the collegiate levels. To remedy this deficiency, career education asks that persons from the world of work outside of education be willing to serve as resource persons in classrooms and to open up the work place for student and educator observation. Students in our schools today need to learn from persons who have been through the "school of hard knocks" as well as from those who have been through the "school of hard books."

A conscious effort beginning in the early elementary school and continuing through all of formal education, to teach good work habits is a second essential adaptability skill of concern to career education. By "work habits," we are not speaking of "work values"—of personal reasons why a particular individual would make career decisions. Rather, we are speaking only about those basic work habits which, over the years, have been identified as clearly related to productivity.

Let me put it in the most direct possible terms. We want all students to learn to try—to do their best at any assignment—to begin their work on time—to finish their work assignments before stopping—to cooperate with their fellow workers—and to recognize the interdependence of various workers and so the necessity for someone who directs and/or supervises others. If youth first become aware of the nature and importance of good work habits only when they leave schooling for the world of paid employment, it is too late. Such work habits, if they are to become a part of the person, must be consciously taught beginning in the early elementary school. To be fully effective, they must be reenforced in the home and family structure. Thus, this is one way in which the home and family become part of the collaborative effort known as career education. Good work habits, as adaptability skills, are fully as essential as are the basic academic skills.

Second, each student, at whatever point she or he leaves the formal educational system for the world of paid employment, needs one or more sets of specific vocational skills that can be used to gain entry into today's labor market. For some students, such skills will have to be learned at the secondary school level. Increasingly, many others will be learning such skills at the postsecondary, sub-baccalaureate degree level. Thousands will continue to seek acquisition of such skills at the undergraduate and/or graduate levels in our institutions of higher education. The beginnings of such specific skills, for all students, must be found in the secondary school experience. English, for the prospective writer, is vocational skills training just as much as machine shop is vocational skill training for the prospective machinist. We need to rid ourselves of the false notion that, in our secondary schools, some students are getting ready to work while others are getting ready for college. Too many students have, in the past, gone to college *instead* of going to work. With no clear vocational goals, many have learned, while in college, much more about how to enjoy life

than about how to pay for it. Career education seeks to insert, at every level of education from the secondary school through the graduate college, a recognition of the need for and the importance of using education as a means of acquiring entry level vocational skills.

If this goal is to be implemented in a meaningful fashion, it will mean a sizeable increase in vocational-technical education at both the secondary and the postsecondary school levels. It will also mean an increase in work experience and work-study programs for both college and noncollege bound students beginning in the high school and continuing throughout all of higher education. We simply cannot expect that all, or even most, of the skills required for entry into the world of paid employment can be simulated or taught only within the school setting. The job-seeking, job-getting, and job-holding skills needed in today's society are an essential part of these basic vocational skills. Participation of the business-labor-industry community with educational personnel will be essential if today's students are to acquire such skills.

Third, career decision-making skills are absolutely essential in a society, such as ours, that worships, above all else, freedom of choice for each individual. A common mistake that is made is one of thinking about career decision-making as though it occurred at only one point in time. It is essential to recognize that this is a development process. As such, it includes career awareness, career motivation, career exploration, the making of a wide variety of career choices, career preparation, career entry, and career progression.

Career awareness is the starting point. I am convinced that many of today's youth have not rejected work. Rather, in effect, they have never heard of it—except in a negative fashion described as "labor". They have never seen it, touched it, smelled it, or done it. Many have no realistic concept of the nature of the world of work—nor even the name or nature of their parents' occupations. This is illustrated by a little boy I heard about who asked his mother why his Daddy always brought home a whole briefcase full of papers to work on at night. When the mother replies by explaining that "Daddy can't get all his work done at the office," the little boy replied by asking, "Well, why don't they put him in a slower group?"

To correct this situation, youth need to be exposed, during the early elementary school years, to a broad overview of the nature of the world of paid employment. Such a view is one designed to make children aware that a wide variety of kinds of work exist and are needed in our society, that people work for differing reasons, and that our occupational society is an orderly place in terms of relationships between various broad occupational classifications. For this to occur, the collaborative efforts of both the business-labor-industry community and the home and family will be required.

To become aware of the general nature of the world of paid employment is one thing. To consider how one might choose to occupy a particular place in that world is quite a different thing. Awareness must be followed by exploration—with a searching for how one's interests, talents, and values can be utilized in ways leading to occupational decisions that are satisfying to the individual and beneficial to society. For such decisions to be made hurriedly, or at only one particular point in time is both dangerous and upsetting. Youth need "tryout" experiences that will allow them to experience something of what it would be like if they chose a particular field or classification of work. Such "tryout" experiences, if they are to be realistic, must include experiences in the real world of paid employment. For many students, the junior high school years are good times for this kind of experience. For many others, particularly the college-bound, such "tryout" experiences should continue through the senior high school years and into part of the undergraduate experience on a college campus.

The making of specific career decisions demands that each person answer, for herself or himself, three questions: (a) What is important to me?; (b) What is possible for me?; and (c) What is probably for me? To answer such questions, in terms of one's entire future, is increasingly impossible in these times of rapid change. The certainty of uncertainty is what faces most young people today. At the same time, a reality of the moment and the short-run future always exists. It is a reality that can, with the collaborative efforts of the formal education system and the business-labor-industry community, be communicated to our youth. If such information regarding educational and occupational opportunities available for choice are combined with the personal understandings of interests, aptitudes, and values gained from the collaborative experiences offered by career education, each youth will have a wider and more informed basis for personal career decisionmaking. Remember, a *reasoned* pattern of career decisions for each youth is what we seek—not necessarily decisions that seem reasonable to us. For this to happen, considerable strengthening of career guidance and counseling must take place in our educational institutions. Part of this strengthening must come from the resources—both personal and physical—of the business-labor-industry community and the home and family structure.

Work Values

Finally, a few words about the nature and importance of work values is in order. No matter how much help is provided in career awareness, career exploration, career preparation, or career decisionmaking based on a combination of self and occupational information, the very personal question of "WHY SHOULD *I* WORK?" remains for each individual. Answers to this question can be viewed from an economic, a sociological, or a psychological base. Each individual can be expected to use these three bases, singly or in some

combination, for answering this most personal question. As they do, some will find themselves choosing to utilize their work values in unpaid work–for example, as a volunteer worker, as a full-time homemaker, or in work done as part of their leisure time. Many others will want to answer this question in terms of the setting in which they spend their greatest number of waking hours–their work place in the world of paid employment.

If work values are to be meaningful in the world of paid employment, it must be possible for workers to exercise them in that world. This, of course, is the general topic of humanization of the work place and one that cannot be discussed here. I mention it simply to illustrate that, if the career education efforts I have been speaking about here are to be initiated, this topic cannot be ignored.

Let me conclude by stating, in the most simple and direct terms possible, the goals of the career education movement. In a societal sense, these goals can be stated by saying that we want every individual in these United States to: (a) want to work; (b) acquire the skills necessary to work in these times; and (c) engage in work that is satisfying to the individual and beneficial to society. In an individualistic sense, we want work–(true work, not labor)–to become (a) possible; (b) meaningful; and (c) satisfying for each individual.

These goals are ones that cannot be met if only our formal educational system is working toward them. They will demand the kinds of collaborative efforts and dedication that I have been talking about in this paper. Both the individuals in our society and the larger society itself badly need these kinds of collaborative efforts. They need them now.

CAREER EDUCATION AND THE BUSINESS-LABOR-INDUSTRY COMMUNITY

The basic theme of these remarks centers around an assertion that the career education concept and the business-labor-industry community in the United States need each other. Both have much to gain, and nothing to lose, by entering into an active, collaborative relationship. My purpose here is to explain and attempt to defend this position.

To do so demands that two topics be briefly discussed. First, it will be necessary to outline the basic nature, goals, and methodology of career education. Second, I would like to outline the role I hope the business-labor-industry community will play in career education

Career Education: Goals and Needs

Career education is a movement that has committed itself to helping all individuals understand and capitalize on the increasingly close relationships that exist today and that are coming to American society. The two areas of expertise involved—i.e., education *and* work—make it obvious that career education cannot be effective if only educators are involved. That is why, from the beginning, career education has been pictured as a *collaborative* effort involving educators, the business-labor-industry community, and the home and family structure.

Career education is needed for two basic reasons. First, the "world of schooling" and the "world of paid employment" are out of kilter in the United States. Too many people see themselves as going to school primarily so they can go on to still further schooling. Some keep going and some quit. As a result, we have, in terms of job requirements, both "over-educated" and "under-educated" workers in the work force. Both the boredom of the "over-educated" worker and the frustration of the "under-educated" worker contribute to worker alienation—and thus to lower levels of productivity. The results are good neither for society nor for the individual worker.

Second, when the increasingly technological nature of our society is considered simultaneously with its increasingly rapid rate of change, it is clear that persons seeking to work must be equipped with a combination of adaptability skills (that will help them change with change) and a set of job-specific skills that will enable them to enter the labor market. It is equally clear that our current system of formal education—from the elementary school through the college levels—has not changed in ways that will effectively equip students with both kinds of skills.

Equipping Students with Adaptability Skills

There are six kinds of adaptability skills emphasized by career education. Only a thumbnail outline of the ways we hope to provide students with such skills can be presented here:

1. *Basic academic skills.* We see "reading, writing, and arithmetic" as the most important adaptability skills needed by today's youth. Clear evidence exists that thousands of youth leave school unequipped with such skills. It is basically a matter of educational productivity. We seek to increase educational productivity through reducing worker alienation among both students and teachers. Our methods are essentially the same as those used in reducing worker alienation in business and industrial settings.

2. *Basic work habits.* Good work habits are essential to productivity in any field and so certainly qualify as adaptability skills. Like most other positive social habits, they are practiced best by adults if learned as children. Schools have slackened their emphasis on teaching work habits in the last 30 years. Career education seeks to turn this around through having such habits taught consciously, conscientiously, and proudly by all teachers beginning in the early elementary school years.

3. *Work values.* Societal changes have produced changes in the variety of ways persons answer the question "Why should *I* choose to work?" Our youth need to understand the differing kinds of work values that exist in today's society and to choose some set of work values that will be personally meaningful to them. Career education seeks to help students learn and appreciate this variety. Exactly what work values a particular individual chooses is not nearly so important as *that* he or she chooses some such set of values. Make no mistake. We *do* want students to *want* to work. Career education is not ashamed to admit this.

4. *Knowledge of Work, Work Environments, and Occupations.* Many youth today haven't rejected work. Rather, they have had no first-hand experiencing of work. There is only so much one can learn about work out of a book. Career education seeks to help all students both observe and experience work. In addition, career education seeks to help all students know and understand basic elements of economic awareness, the free enterprise system, the organized labor movement, and consumer education. Such knowledge is vital to adaptability and to career choice-making.

5. *Career Decisionmaking Skills.* Career decision making, like decision making in general, represents a set of skills that can be learned by almost all persons. Such skills are vital to both initial career choices and to adult adaptability needs. Career education seeks to equip youth with such skills

through the joint efforts of counselors, teachers, parents, and members of the business-labor-industry community.

6. *Job Seeking, Job Getting, and Job Holding Skills.* Again, we see a set of important, yet basically simple, skills that are essential to career adaptability. Career education seeks to equip all students—those going to college as well as those who do not—with such skills and to give students opportunities to practice such skills in real and/or simulated situations.

It is career education's conscious and purposeful emphasis on these six adaptability skills which, when given high educational priority, most clearly make career education something "new and different."

Equipping Students with Job-Specific Skills

In the past, only students in vocational or technical education were viewed as needing job-specific skills by formal education. Career education seeks to correct this situation in three basic ways.

First, career education aims to make education, as preparation for work, a prominent and permanent goal of all who teach and of all who learn. Career education seeks to have all students, by the time they leave the educational *system* (Note: for some, this will mean high school but for others it will mean a college or university) be equipped with a set of vocational skills that can be used to enter the labor market. To fulfill this aim, career education encourages increases in vocational and technical education at secondary and postsecondary education levels. In addition, career education encourages colleges and universities to offer some vocational skill training to supplement their liberal arts emphasis.

Second, career education seeks to call national attention to disparities between availability of kinds of vocational skill training available to youth and entry occupations available in the world of paid employment. Hopefully, this may encourage the general public to support a wide variety of educational institutions whose mix is more in line with reality.

Third, career education, in emphasizing entry job skills for school leavers, tries to bring equal emphasis to vocational training opportunities existing outside of formal education—including both OJT and formal apprenticeship programs. Differences between acquiring initial entry level skills and acquiring the skills of a competent worker—be it a craftsman or a lawyer—are great and becoming greater. It is an element of reality that all youth today need to understand.

Note that the career education concept calls for identification of need and provisions for more appropriate vocational skill training at all levels of

education. Such training is actually provided by vocational educators, by college professors, by members of the business-labor-industry community, and by employed professional persons. In this sense, career education can be thought of as a catalyst for providing such training. Such a catalyst has been needed, we think, for years.

Career Education and the Business-Labor-Industry Community

From the beginning, those of us in career education have emphasized that career education is not something educators can do by themselves. Without the active involvement of both the business-labor-industry community and the home and family structure, career education cannot succeed. Here, time does not permit me to talk about the home and family structure's role in career education. I can only provide a brief listing of the basic ways in which we seek the collaborative efforts of the business-labor-industry community. These include:

1. Serving as resource persons in classrooms at all levels of education to help both students know and appreciate relationships between education and particular kinds of work.

2. Providing observational work experience, and work-study to students *and* to those who educate students—to teachers, counselors, college professors, and administrators.

3. Providing expert knowledge and consultation to educators concerning the nature of work, the changing nature of occupations, learning opportunities in the business-labor-industry community, and basic principles of the free enterprise system and the organized labor movement.

4. Providing collaborative assistance to education personnel in attempts to help school leavers, at any level of education, make a successful transition from school to work.

5. Providing effective ways of humanizing the work environment so that work, in the world of paid employment, can become more meaningful and more satisfying to individual workers.

6. Encouraging educators and educational systems to change in ways consistent with the career education concept.

7. Working with educators who, with both youth and adult students, are trying to provide skills that will help persons make more productive use of leisure time.

In all of these ways, educators must have the collaborative assistance of the business-labor-industry community if career education is to succeed. The expertise in that community must be combined with the expertise of professional educators if the challenges facing youth in these times are to be met.

Concluding Remarks

I hope these remarks, by trying to convey what career education *is*, have convinced you that career education is *not*:

1. A new name for "vocational education."
2. An attempt to discourage youth from attending college.
3. An attempt to make education, as preparation for work, the *only* goal of American education.
4. An attempt to downplay the importance and necessity of both general education and liberal arts education.
5. An attempt to lower educational standards.
6. An attempt to de-humanize American education.
7. An attempt to restore the classic work ethic.

Career education is none of those things. In its simplest form, career education is an attempt to help all individuals (a) want to work; (b) acquire the skills necessary to work in these times; and (c) engage in work that is satisfying to the individual and beneficial to society. If successful, "work" will once again become an honored expression—not a dirty four-letter word—for all persons. If the business-labor-industry will join actively in this effort, it can become a reality.

CAREER EDUCATION'S POTENTIAL FOR INCREASING PRODUCTIVITY

Productivity—expressed as output per person hour—has become a matter of national and international concern. It is commonly seen as one of the root factors involved in the inflation-recession problems currently facing us. Problems affecting productivity have been discussed, from time to time, in terms of such major events as the energy crisis, changes in technology, American policies in fiscal, monetary, international relations, etc., and in many other areas as well. From time to time, blame seems to have been assigned such diverse groups as the Administration, the Congress, big business, big Government, big Labor, and the major oil producing countries of the world. It seems probable that valid relationships—casual or otherwise—do exist justifying the claims of those who argue such directions.

My concern here is that the American system of formal education be included in such discussions, both as a contributor to the problem of productivity, and as an instrument to be used in seeking solutions to the problem. A small, quiet revolution has already begun that operates under these simultaneous assumptions of cause and cure. It is known as Career Education. The U.S. Office of Education recently published an official policy paper on this topic entitled AN INTRODUCTION TO CAREER EDUCATION. That paper contains a listing of 11 current conditions calling for educational reform. Each of these 11 conditions can, I believe, be related to problems of productivity. The changes called for by career education, with reference to each of these 11 conditions, can, in my opinion, be viewed as making some contributions toward increasing productivity.

Here, then, I would like to name each of the 11 conditions, suggest ways in which it can be said to have contributed to lack of productivity, and outline briefly changes called for by career education leading toward correction of the condition and so to increase in productivity. The two assumptions with which I begin are: (a) problems of productivity have a long history of development and will require a long time to cure. There are no immediate "cures" that will change things suddenly or dramatically; and (b) while the changes called for by career education are clearly only part of the needed solutions, each can help some.

Condition 1: Too many persons leaving our educational system are deficient in the basic academic skills required for adaptability in today's rapidly changing society.

Condition 2: Too many students fail to see meaningful relationships between what they are being asked to learn in school and what they will do when they leave the educational system. This is true of both those who remain to graduate and those who drop out of the educational system.

There can be little doubt regarding the importance of mastering the basic academic skills for those who would seek to work in today's world of paid employment. Unless such skills have been mastered, people have difficulty learning the job specific skills many are asked to acquire once they are employed. They have even greater difficulty successfully completing various forms of postsecondary education that many need to enter today's labor market. Finally, they have great difficulty, when, as adults, their specific jobs become obsolete and they are faced with problems of learning new vocational skills.

Similarly, there is little doubt but that many of today's youth are not learning the basic academic skills very well. Educators have observed thousands of small children who begin school as eager learners and who are completely "turned off" prior to the fourth grade. Many seem basically lacking in motivation for learning. They see no good reason for going to school other than so they can go on to still more schooling. Moreover, the schooling they have had has alienated many of them from their primary work roles as students.

Career education seeks to correct these conditions in two ways. First, it seeks to motivate students to learn through using a "success," rather than a "failure," approach to education. That is, instead of emphasizing to students what they failed to do or how others did better, we seek to give each student credit for what she or he actually accomplished. We think that, if the student is made aware of the fact he or she did something, it will motivate the student to do more. Second, career education seeks to show students, beginning in the early elementary grades, *why* it is important they learn the basic academic skills—that such skills are essentially prerequisites to success in most occupations today. By showing students why such skills are needed and used in the "real world" by adults, we hope to motivate them to try harder to master these skills.

In short, we are trying to make the work of the student—namely, the mastery of academic skills—both more satisfying and more meaningful to the student. In so doing, we have simply adopted a basic principle of worker productivity that says productivity will increase if workers are rewarded for what they have accomplished and if workers can see the importance of the work they are asked to do. By taking this approach, we hope to increase educational productivity—i.e., academic achievement.

Condition 3: American education, as currently structured, best meets the educational needs of that minority of persons who will someday become college graduates. It fails to place equal emphasis on meeting the educational needs of that vast majority of students who will never be college graduates.

Condition 11: Post high school education has given insufficient emphasis to educational programs at the sub-baccalaureate degree level.

Condition 4: American education has not kept pace with the rapidity of change in the postindustrial occupational society. As a result, when worker qualifications are compared with job requirements, we find overeducated and undereducated workers are present in large numbers. Both the boredom of the overeducated worker and the frustration of the undereducated worker have contributed to growing worker alienation in the total occupational society.

When almost 80% of America's high school students are getting ready to do what almost 80% will never accomplish (i.e., become a college graduate) there seems little doubt but that something is wrong with our system of education. The "something," as I see it, is the irrational worship of the educational truism that holds "more education makes one better prepared for work" which, if followed blindly, leads to the obviously erroneous conclusion that those who have spent the most time in school are the most prepared for work. This, in turn, has led to an almost universal acceptance of the parental assertion which says "I'd rather have my son *be* a college graduate than *compete* with one."

Unfortunately, in terms of today's youth labor market, that parental assertion carries with it a substantial amount of validity if the only question faced is employment versus unemployment. That is, unemployment among college graduates remains substantially lower than that for high school graduates which, in turn, is lower than that for high school dropouts. The trouble obviously lies in equating the phrase "most prepared for work" with the phrase "those least apt to be unemployed."

When many more youth are looking for jobs than the number of jobs that are available, it is certainly true that employers have tended to employ those who have gone to school longest. They do so, I am sure, using the assumption that, given two applicants, neither of whom has the specific skills the employer seeks, the employer is better off taking the one who has gone to school the longest because that applicant is probably more adaptable to the employer's needs and, in addition, has demonstrated more perseverance. It is hard to argue with this employer assumption.

The result, however, creates a tragic educational "Catch 22" situation for youth. The unemployed youth is led to a conclusion that, if employment is the goal, then more education is the surest route to that goal—no matter what the kind or quality of education. The employed youth, on the other hand, often finds the work less challenging and demanding than his or her education has prepared them to do. With no great intrinsic satisfaction coming from the work itself, the productivity of such youth often declines while their demands for higher wages (which represents the only tangible benefits derived from their jobs) goes up. This reinforces the "school for schooling's sake" syndrome and is, in my view, a direct contributor to current productivity problems in our society.

Career education seeks to turn this situation around by emphasizing the goal of education, as preparation for work, at all levels of American education for all who teach and for all who learn. It seeks to eliminate the question many high school seniors ask which is "Should I go to college or should I go to work?"—as though those who go to college do not go to work. More importantly, career education seeks to bring equal emphasis to adaptability skills and job specific skills as considerations in youth employment patterns. We seek to eliminate the false notion that a degree will be sufficient to find a job and to place greater emphasis on vocational skills the job applicant possesses—whether those skills are learned in a university, in a community college, in a high school, through apprenticeship, or in an on-the-job training situation.

This country must face up to the fact that, while the need for workers trained at the postsecondary school level is increasing, the need for liberal arts graduates with no specific vocational skills is not. We cannot afford to continue to glut the labor market with college graduates far in excess of the number of jobs that require a college education. Our educational system, when compared with occupational requirements, is "out of kilter" today. Career education seeks to correct this imbalance through emphasizing BOTH adaptability skills and job specific skills as student goals.

Condition 5: Too many persons leave our educational system at both the secondary and collegiate levels unequipped with the vocational skills, the self-understanding and career decision-making skills, or the work attitudes that are essential for making a successful transition from school to work.

One of America's ideals have always been freedom of choice—including freedom of occupational choice—for all of its citizens. In seeking to help protect freedom of occupational choice for youth, we have traditionally combined efforts to increase student self-understandings with efforts to help youth understand the world of paid employment. It should be apparent to all of us that we have not succeeded very well in this effort.

Career education seeks to correct this situation in several ways. First, we seek to help pupils, beginning in the elementary school years, to observe the world of paid employment, to gain some general understanding of its nature by such observations, and to gain some appreciation of the importance of interdependence of all kinds of work for societal survival. Second, career education seeks to increase student self-understanding through letting students try out various occupational roles and so gain, through *doing*, a better understanding of both their interests and their abilities. We seek to emphasize the fact that each of us is best known to ourselves and to others through our accomplishments.

Career educations's prime emphasis is on meeting the human need of all human beings to do—to accomplish—to achieve something that will help the

individual understand himself or herself. Equally important, such an emphasis helps the individual develop a personally meaningful set of work values—a way of answering the question "Why should *I* choose to work?" that goes beyond simply economic considerations. Too many people today continue to look for jobs rather than for work. Career education places equal emphasis on making work possible, meaningful, and satisfying to each individual.

Third, career education emphasizes directly career decisionmaking skills, job seeking, job getting, and job holding skills for all youth. These are skills that can be learned by almost all youth. They are among the most important of the adaptability skills that will be increasingly needed by persons in our society. Coupled with such skills, career education emphasizes teaching youth good work habits consciously, conscientiously, and proudly. Such habits have, for many years, been among the cornerstones of productivity. We think it is time they are emphasized at all levels of our educational system.

Condition 8: Insufficient attention has been given to learning opportunities which exist outside the structure of formal education and are increasingly needed by both youth and adults in our society.

Condition 9: The general public, including parents and the business-industry-labor community, has not been given an adequate role in formulation of educational policy.

Condition 7: The growing needs for continuing and recurrent education of adults are not being met adequately by our current systems of public education.

For too long, educators have operated as though students could learn only from books, only in classrooms, and only from certified teachers. As a result, they have assumed that the best way to prepare students for the world of paid employment is to lock them up in a classroom and keep them away from that world. The business-labor-industry community has made a false assumption that readying youth for the world of paid employment is none of their business. The general public has made a false assumption that public schools exist primarily for the benefit of youth and that once youth have left such schools, their need for education will have ended.

Career education aims to correct each of these false assumptions in a variety of ways. First, we seek to join the "world of schooling" and the "world of paid employment" through providing observational, work experience, and work-study opportunities for students—and for those who educate students—i.e., for teachers, counselors, and school administrators. Many teachers who would like to show students career implications of subject matter cannot do so because they do not know what they are. We seek to correct this through encouraging educators to visit and to gain some experience in the world of work outside of

formal education and to encourage the use of resource persons from the business-labor-industry community in the classroom.

There are severe limits to what students can learn about work out of a book. Accordingly, career education seeks to make work experience—paid or unpaid—a general educational methodology available to all students beginning in the junior high school years and continuing through the college and university system. To the greatest extent possible, such work experience should be aimed primarily at career exploration as part of the career decision-making process.

To embark on a massive work experience emphasis will require the collaboration and expertise of the business-labor-industry community. Educators simply do not have sufficient expertise or resources to operate such programs by themselves. This means that the implementation of career education necessarily involves active participation in educational policy making by personnel from the business-labor-industry community.

An emphasis on career decision making that ignores parents is doomed to almost certain failure. Work values are heavily influenced by family systems of personal values. The school has no right to substitute the values of a particular segment of society for those held by individual families. Part of career education's efforts to help students view work favorably centers on helping them gain a greater understanding of and appreciation for work done by their parents. In so doing, the result is often an increase in the parent's own sense of personal worth and a greater appreciation for contributions the parent makes to society through her or his own work. While, in many ways, a side benefit of career education, this effort alone may make some positive contribution to increases in productivity.

Finally, career education stands squarely behind the lifelong learning concept. The public schools are the public's schools. We have passed the time when they can be viewed as only daytime institutions existing only to serve youth. The needs of adults for both occupational retraining and upgrading and for assistance in finding productive uses of leisure time are growing and will continue to grow. If our schools could be kept open 6 days a week, 18 hours a day, and 12 months each year, it would do much to meet adult needs related to productivity. Additionally, it would allow much greater flexibility in career education's goal of providing, through work experience, a combination of a "learning-to-do" with a "doing-to-learn" for secondary school age youth and for college students.

Condition 6: The growing need for a presence of women in the work force has not been reflected adequately in either the educational or the career options typically pictured for girls enrolled in our educational system.

Condition 10: American education, as currently structured, does not adequately meet the needs of minority or economically disadvantaged persons in our society.

Problems of both race and sex stereotyping in occupational choice and occupational opportunities are currently attracting much national attention. It is too bad that they have not attracted a similar degree of action. We have learned that it is one thing to express yourself as being in favor of eliminating such biases through affirmative action programs and quite another to truly act affirmatively. To a considerable extent, failure to move more rapidly or dramatically in these matters has, in fact, been due to lack of ability to find qualified women or minority persons to fill vacant positions. Such persons cannot be created where they do not exist.

Career education takes a long-run approach to this problem beginning in the early elementary school years. Part of this effort is a conscious attempt to remove both race and sex stereotyping from elementary school textbooks and career materials. A second part is devoted to providing adult role models of persons working in various occupations who have overcome such stereotyping in their lives. A third part of this effort involves frank and candid discussion of the problems involved in career decision-making activities.

Problems of protecting and expanding opportunities for freedom of occupational choice for low-income persons are still prevalent in our society. It isn't terribly traumatic to remain occupationally undecided if your father owns the factory. It is quite another thing if you don't know where the money will come to pay for your next meal. It is one thing to understand certain occupational opportunities may become available if you secure the right education, but it is quite another thing to find the funds necessary to secure such education.

Career education is committed to destroying the cycle of poverty that leads to personal feelings of helplessness and so to lack of productivity. We think it would be a good investment to assure low-income persons that sufficient funds can be made available to them, in some fashion, so as to enable them to make and implement career choices. The cost of crime, vandalism, violence, and drugs is far greater than would be the cost of providing sufficient funds to enable low-income youth to make and to implement career choices. We cannot hope to increase national productivity substantially if we fail to allow low-income people the means to become as productive as their talents will allow them to be.

Concluding Statement

These, then, are the 11 conditions that the career education movement seeks to alleviate. In summarizing, I have contended that career education can make positive contributions to productivity problems in each of the following ways:

1. Through making the work of the student–and so the concept of work itself–more meaningful and satisfying to students.

2. Through increasing student mastery of the basic academic skills essential for adaptability.

3. Through encouraging the process of making both the nature and the availability of educational opportunities more consistent with the needs and demands of the occupational society.

4. Through emphasizing education, as preparation for work, as a prominent and permanent goal of all of American education.

5. Through placing equal emphasis on adaptability skills and job specific skills in occupational preparation programs.

6. Through increasing the career decisionmaking skills, the job-seeking, job-getting, and job-holding skills of all students.

7. Through increasing student knowledge of the world of paid employment and the requirements for entering and succeeding in that world.

8. Through involving persons from the business-labor-industry community in helping students understand and capitalize on relationships between education and work.

9. Through encouraging the productive use of leisure time as part of one's personal value system and of one's lifestyle.

10. Through encouraging parents to participate more actively and more positively in career decisions made by their children.

11. Through reducing by a long-range program, both race and sex stereotyping as they affect occupational choice and opportunity.

12. Through encouraging and promising lifelong learning opportunities for adults and for out-of-school youth.

13. Through supporting and encouraging programs of educational financial assistance to low-income persons.

Career education is a concept whose effective implementation calls for action programs on all of these fronts. Some of these actions will require substantial funding, but the majority do not require great amounts of new dollars. Rather, the primary cost involved is that of the effort required to convert the goals into

effective actions. Career education is a concept crying for effective action implementation.

There is no community in our nation that could not, if it chose to do so, move immediately toward implementing the career education concept. If all communities would take such actions, it is obvious that all problems related to productivity in our nation would still be far from completely solved. I hope it also is obvious that career education is a concept that can help, to some extent, in solving the problem of productivity. It seems to me it is a concept well worth trying.

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